

2014 NAACL Treasurer's Report

Joel Tetreault

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1. REPORT SUMMARY

- Our budget took a huge blow in 2010 after the Los Angeles NAACL conference, but the last two NAACLs we have been building back slowly. We need to keep this positive growth. Currently the bank account stands at \$42k.
- I took the tactic of being fiscally conservative last year to help get us out of the hole. This meant being selective of which events we sponsor. We should continue this strategy in 2014.
- For 2014, we should continue to sponsor NACLO, Emerging Regions Fund and the 2015 LSA Summer Institute.
- For the future, we should consider having *several* sponsorship chairs who start early and target many of the new NLP startups and companies with NLP wings to increase our sponsorship per conference.

2. NAACL REPORT - JUNE 10, 2014

The NAACL Chapter's bank account holds \$42,075.50 as of June 10, 2014. This includes the \$17,987 surplus from NAACL 2012 and the recent \$5,000 outlay to support NACLO this year. To put the above figures in perspective, last year's end-of-year balance was \$41,776.06 (which was the lowest balance since 2007), so we are starting to build back from the loss incurred in NAACL 2010 right after our bank account peaked at \$154k. Note that our bank account does not yet reflect the outcome of NAACL 2013.

In 2013, our primary expenditures were the sponsoring of external events: NACLO (\$5k) and the NAACL Emerging Regions Fund (\$1.5k). Our 2014 expenditures are likely to be the same.

A small bank account balance is troublesome for two reasons. First, it decreases our effectiveness to support Computational Linguistics locally and in Central and South America. Second, it decreases our ability to absorb a conference that incurs a large debt. Since the conference is the primary source of revenue, our ability to build back the account balance is contingent on conferences being continually successful. The last two years have seen registration rates go up slightly to increase revenues, however there is a limit to how much this can change the account over the long term.

Related Links

* Much of the above is reproduced from my 2014 Treasurer Report to ACL:

http://aclweb.org/adminwiki/index.php?title=2014Q1_Reports:_NAACL

* More details of our 2013 year can be found in my previous report and presentation:

http://naacl.org/minutes/2013/NAACL_Treasurer_Presentation_2013.pdf

http://naacl.org/minutes/2013/NAACL_Treasurer_Report_2013.pdf

* To catch up on the NAACL 2010 loss, Chris Manning's 2012 Treasurer Report provides some more details:

<http://naacl.org/minutes/2012/2012-treasurers-report.pdf>

3. NAACL Financial Strategy / Outlays

Given the financial situation that we were in 2013, I took the position of being fiscally conservative. In previous years we had funded several events such as the JHU Workshop, LSA, etc. up to almost \$30k in some years. This is great for promoting CL, however I felt we needed to dial things back to revive the account. So last year we passed on sponsoring LSA at our regular \$10k/yr. There wasn't a JHU Summer Workshop so that actually was a major outlay we didn't need to consider "fortunately." The following table lists our major outlays for the last three years.

2011 (Total = \$27,997)	
LSA Linguistic Institute 2011	\$10,000
NACLO 2011	\$5,000
Emerging Regions Fund	\$2,030
JHU WS 2011	\$10,967
2012 (Total = \$27,329)	
NACLO 2012	\$5,000
Emerging Regions Fund	\$1,480
LSA Linguistics Institute 2013	\$10,000
JHU WS 2012	\$10,849
2013 (Total = \$6,500)	
NACLO 2013	\$5,000
Emerging Regions Fund	\$1,500

I want to continue to be conservative for 2014. I know it's an unpopular thing but we really can't take another hit like we did in 2010 and I want to have enough in the account for years to come to buffer us just in case this happens, as well as increase our ability to sponsor more events. That being said, I want to continue to sponsor the NACLO and emerging regions fund since they are going to have the biggest impact down the road for getting more people into NLP in North and South America. Last year we decided to fund NACLO for \$5k and have a budget of \$1500 for one or two emerging regions conferences.

4. Future Improvements

So far, the last two NAACLs have produced surpluses which is a step in the right direction. A large part of that is due to Priscilla negotiating hard with the conference hotels to keep our costs down and minimize the risks (thanks Priscilla!), as well our conference sponsors. She proposed the idea at our NAACL Board Meeting in Atlanta of hosting the conference in the same city twice or partnering with the same hotel chain to cut a better overall deal. I think this is a fantastic idea and as of a few weeks ago we have locations already signed for the next two NAACL conferences (with the 2016 one possibly co-located with ICML). Additionally, I want to note that at the last NAACL we had several innovations: co-locating with ICML and hosting a joint workshop, the conference scheduler app (Matt Post), the videos (CCB et al.) and changing up the format of the banquet. I think these changes go a long way in making NAACL stand out from the other NLP conferences and hopefully will attract more people to come out in '15 and '16.

One idea I had I wanted to throw out there was with respect to sponsorship chairs for NAACL. Typically Priscilla contacts the main players since she has a relationship with them (Google, MS, Amazon, Nuance, etc.) and a sponsorship chair helps out with other companies. I was thinking that given how hot NLP is right now in industry (it's often *hard* to find good NLP engineers and scientists) that we possibly enlarge the number of sponsor chairs and try to target startups and smaller companies (many of whom are founded by top NLP PhDs in the last few years) and companies that have a growing NLP wing (for example, Reuters or some hedge funds in NYC actually). We may not get \$5000 or more from these places but \$1000 here and there can start adding up if we have a lot of places to call from. However, this requires a bunch of dedicated and personable people to help identify and talk to these smaller places that may have just popped up. Additionally, having been in industry for many years now, sponsorship budgets

for the following year are often locked down in the late fall or early winter. This means that if we don't start asking before January, companies may not have money allocated if we ask around March. So the idea I wanted to float was: *let's get more sponsorship chairs, especially those who have contacts with the smaller companies, and let's start early on this.*

The table below lists our sponsorship intake and ACLs the last six years. Note that we are actually fairly stable the last few years but I think given the state of NLP in industry in North America, I think we can do a lot better for 2015. While emailing Priscilla, she also noted that the local sponsor chairs can play an important role: *"at ACL 2011 in Portland, Brian Roark and Richard Sproat contacted a local brewery and got free beer for our banquet which saved a couple of thousand in free drink tickets we would have otherwise handed out. So, maybe this person could also think of local parts of nationwide chains to hit up (Dunkin Doughnuts? Starbucks? Staples?)"*

ACL			NAACL	
2007 Prague	unclear		2007 Rochester	\$ 19,000.00
2008 Columbus	\$ 36,700.00		2008	N/A
2009 Singapore	\$ 26,456.24		2009 Boulder	\$ 30,750.00
2010 Uppsala	\$ 46,244.40	approx \$30K in kind from Swedish government	2010 Los Angeles	\$ 38,719.09
2011 Portland	\$ 62,550.00	+Banquet beer sponsor	2011	N/A
2012 Jeju	\$ 39,504.79	+ small amount from Tourism Bd for each non-Korean	2012 Montreal	\$ 30,304.84
2013 Sofia	\$ 62,052.75	+ \$11,000 in kind	2013 Atlanta	\$ 25,452.25
2014 Baltimore	\$ 57,292.24	tbd	2014	N/A